



Maine Department of Conservation
Natural Areas Program

Cypripedium reginae Walt.

Showy Lady's-slipper

Habitat: Circumneutral peatlands (often at edges) or sunlit openings of mossy woods. [Forested wetland; Open wetland, not coastal nor rivershore (non-forested, wetland)]

Range: Newfoundland to North Dakota and Manitoba, south in Appalachians to Georgia.

Phenology: In Maine flowers late June to July.

Family: Orchidaceae

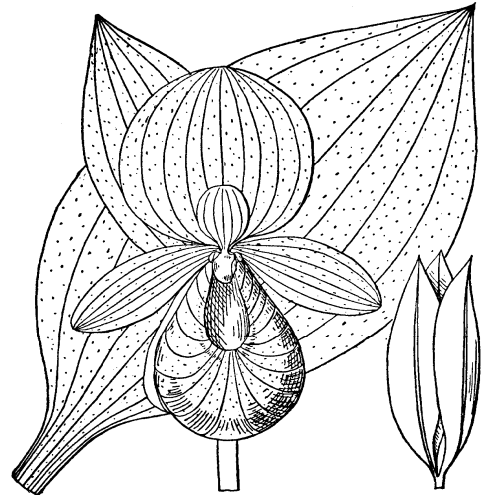


Illustration from Britton & Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, 2nd ed.

Aids to Identification: The largest and showiest of our lady's-slippers. Foliage of non-flowering plants emerging in early spring may be mistaken for false hellebore. Flowering plants are unique with their tall leafy stems bearing one or two large flowers with white petals and sepals contrasting with magenta pink pouch.

Densely pubescent throughout, the hairs may cause a rash similar to poison ivy.

Ecological characteristics: Showy lady's-slippers apparently require constant moisture, some sunlight and circumneutral soil conditions. In acid bogs their roots go under the acid *Sphagnum* to more neutral groundwater below. In clearings or woods edges colonies may be very large and flowering abundant, but plants in deep shade often lack flowers. *C. reginae* seeds seem to germinate best at depths of at least 5 cm. It has been suggested that this may account for the presence of dense colonies in deer yards where the deer hooves may help to push seeds to the appropriate depth. *C. reginae* takes about 15 years to reach flowering age, which explains why they are slow to reappear after colonies have been dug up.

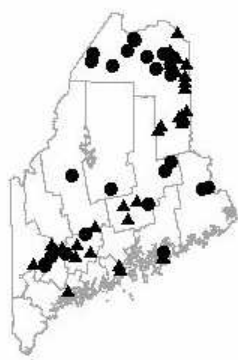
Synonyms: Formerly known as *Cypripedium spectabile* Salisb.

Rarity of *Cypripedium reginae*

State Rank:	S3	Rare in Maine.
New England Rank:	None	
Global Rank:	G4	Widespread, abundant, and apparently secure globally, but with cause for long-term concern.

Status of *Cypripedium reginae*

Federal Status:	None	No Federal Status.
State Status:	Threatened	Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened. Listing criteria met: Declining populations, Vulnerable to human activity



○ Historical (before 1983)
● Recent (1983- present)

Known Distribution in Maine:

This rare plant has been documented from a total of 52 town(s) in the following county(ies): Androscoggin, Aroostook, Cumberland, Hancock, Kennebec, Knox, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Washington.

Dates of documented observations are: 1874, 1880, 1889 (2), 1891, 1896, 1903, 1904, 1906, 1907 (2), 1908, 1910 (3), 1914, 1924, 1925, 1935, 1940 (2), 1943, 1950, 1978, 1981 (6), 1982, 1983 (3), 1984, 1985, 1989 (3), 1990 (4), 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1998 (3), 19XX (2), 2000 (2), 2001 (2), 2002 (6)

Reason(s) for rarity:

Habitat destruction and collecting, also scarcity of suitable habitat.

Conservation considerations:

Orchids are popular among some speciality gardeners, and populations of this species are vulnerable to unscrupulous or uneducated collectors. Plants dug from the wild usually do not survive; more importantly, removing these plants harms the natural population and may cause its eventual disappearance. Tissue-culture propagation of this species has been tried in limited instances, but any plants offered for sale have almost certainly been dug from the wild. This orchid grows and flowers best in moderate sunlight, and partial removal of the canopy can benefit the populations, if done correctly.

Plant rarity and status is based on 2008 data and the rest of the information in this fact sheet was downloaded from the Natural Areas Program's Biological and Conservation Database on 29 APR 2004. We are grateful to our Botanical Advisory Group for additional information on particular species, and in particular, to Arthur Haines for his assistance with identifying characteristics and taxonomic questions. Nomenclature follows Haines and Vining's *Flora of Maine* (V.F. Thomas Press, 1998); where older works refer to a plant by another name, it is given under "Synonyms". The Natural Areas Program, within the Department of Conservation, maintains the most comprehensive source of information on Maine's rare or endangered plants and rare or exemplary natural communities, and is a member of the Association for Biodiversity Information.

If you know of locations for this plant or would like more information on this species,
please contact the Natural Areas Program
State House Station 93, Augusta, Maine 04333; telephone (207) 287-8044.

